

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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INFO CINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1091

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SUBJ: MILITARY DENOUNCES CNT

CINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: MVD 985

1. SUMMARY: JOINT SERVICE CHIEFS HAVE ISSUED COMMUNIQUE SAYING ACTIVITIES PURSUED BY CNT AND ARMED FORCES ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WERE " IRRECONCILABLE" AND THAT CNT HAD NO RIGHT PRESSURE FOR REMOVAL OF LEGALLY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES, IE., PRESIDENT BORDABERRY. OPEN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN CNT AND MILITARY WAS PROBABLY INEVITABLE, BUT WAS NOT EXPECTED SO SOON EITHER IN CIVILIAN OR MILITARY CIRCLES. CNT LEADER ISSUED NON- INFLAMATORY STATEMENT THAT REAL CONFLICT WAS NOT BETWEEN THE CONFEDERATION AND MILITARY BUT BETWEEN " PEOPLE AND OLIGARCHY". ISSUES OF WAGES, LABOR LEGISLATION, AND SEVERAL SPECIFIC LABOR DISPUTES COULD ACCELERATE CNT- MILITARY CONFRONTATION. END SUMMARY

2. IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED APRIL 9, THE URUGUAYAN SERVICE CHIEFS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE " SOFT GOLPE" OF FEBRUARY, PUBLICLY DENOUNCED THE COMMUNIST- DOMINATED CNT LABOR CONFEDERATION, AND IN WORDS OF WELL- PLACED DAO SOURCE, " DECLARED WAR" ON THE COMMUNIST- LED CONFEDERATION. DECLARING THAT THERE WERE OMISSIONS
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IN THE CNT' S PUBLIC REPORTS OF ITS MEETINGS WITH MILITARY LEADERS, THE SERVICE CHIEFS SAID THAT THE MEANS WHICH THE CNT AND THE MILITARY WERE UTILIZING TO REACH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES (WHICH CNT CLAIMS ARE THE SAME FOR BOTH) WERE " IRRECONCILABLE". THE TACTICS OF THE CNT, STRIKES AND WORK STOPPAGES, ONLY SERVED TO FURTHER DAMAGE THE FRAGILE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY. THE MILITARY COMMUNIQUE RECOGNIZED THE RIGHT OF UNION TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS, BUT NOT THE " POLITICAL RIGHT TO DEMAND OR PRESSURE FOR AN IRREGULAR CHANGE OF CONSTITUTIONALLY ELECTED OR LEGALLY DESIGNATED AUTHORITIES". THE COMMUNIQUE CONCLUDED THAT IF THIS " POLITICAL AUTHORITY" (I. E. THE PRESIDENT) DECIDES TO SEEK LEGISLATION ON TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION, IT WOULD ONLY BE COMPLYING WITH THE CONSTITUTION.

3. COMMENT: WHILE THE CNT AND THE MILITARY HAVE APPEARED TO BE ON A CONFRONTATION COURSE (REFTTEL, NEITHER OUR CIVILIAN NOR MILITARY SOURCES EXPECTED BATTLE TO BE JOINED SO SOON. SPECIFICALLY, THE MILITARY' S ENDORSEMENT OF NEW MAJOR LEGISLATION WAS NOT EXPECTED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT THE SERVICE CHIEFS MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE CNT' S CAMPAIGN AGAINST PRESIDENT BORDABERRY WAS UNDERMINING THEIR DECISION TO MAINTAIN HIM AS THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT. SECONDLY, THERE ARE CONSERVATIVE CURRENTS

WITHIN THE MILITARY OPPOSED TO THE CNT AND COMMUNIST PARTY' S EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION BY CLAIMING AN IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MILITARY' S " PROGRESSIVE" PROGRAM. THE FACT THAT THE CNT WENT AHEAD WITH ITS STRIKE ACTIVITIES ON MARCH 29, DESPITE THE MILITARY' S " INVITATION" NOT TO DO SO, COULD ALSO HAVE BEEN A FACTOR LEADING THE MILITARY TO BREAK WITH THE CNT AT THIS TIME.

4. THUS FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL CNT REACTION. AN EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIST DAILY " EL POPULAR" OF APRIL 10 CONTAINS A STATEMENT BY CNT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER GERARDO CUESTA WHICH ATTEMPTS MIGHTILY TO DENY THAT THERE IS A BASIS FOR THE MILITARY' S CLAIM THAT ITS MEANS AND THOSE OF THE CNT ARE " IRRECONCIABLE". CUESTA PROTESTED THAT THE REAL ISSUE IS BETWEEN " THE OLIGARCHY AND THE PEOPLE". THE OLIGARCHY, HE STATED, AND NOT THE STRIKES OF THE CNT, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION. ACTIONS AGAINST THE OLIGARCHY, NOT THE UNIONS, ARE REQUIRED, CUESTA CONCLUDED.

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5. IN ADDITION TO THE ISSUES OF WAGES (MVD -1068) AND LABOR LEGISLATION ON WHICH THE CNT AND THE MILITARY COULD CLASH, THERE ARE OTHER AREAS OF FRICTION WHICH COULD ACCELERATE THIS CONFRONTATION:

(A) THE OCCUPATION OF " LA INDUSTRIAL" TEXTILE PLANT AT JUAN LACAZE BEGUN FEBRUARY 5, WAS TERMINATED BY THE POLICE APRIL 9 (MVD 1068) AND, AS A RESULT, THE CNT' S TEXTILE FEDERATION (COT) HAS CALLED A NATIONWIDE SYMPATHY STRIKE FOR THE INDUSTRY APRIL 10. ELEMENTS WITHIN COT CAN BE EXPECTED TO PRESSURE THE CNT LEADER FIP TO ADOPT A LESS CONCILITORY POSITION IN ANSWER TO THE LATEST MILITARY COMMUNIQUE.

(B) UNTMRA, THE CNT' S METAL AND ELECTRICAL WORKERS FEDERATION HAS SCHEDULED A NATIONWIDE STRIKE FOR THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 10 TO SUPPORT ITS DEMAND FOR A 30 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE.

(C) THE CNT' S SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS UNION IS PROTESTING THE TRANSFER AND CLAIMED DISMISSAL OF VARIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTORS. THIS AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL' S (CONAE) EFFORTS TO DEPOLITICIZE SCHOOLS COULD BRING THIS VOLATILE SECTOR INTO OPEN CONFLICT WITH MILITARY.
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